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**Tourism Partnership North Wales**

## Campaign is putting golf courses on the map

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## Campaign is putting golf courses on the map

A major drive to promote golf courses in North Wales has swung into action – and foreign golfers are already arriving in droves.

The area is proving particularly popular with golfers from Sweden where courses are now closed until next March.

But golfers from other countries in Northern Europe are also coming here and now there are plans to crack the Irish market too.

The Golf North Wales campaign is the brainchild of Tourism Partnership North Wales who are responsible for the strategic development of tourism in the region.

They are aiming to ensure that North Wales enjoys a big slice of the action generated by the Ryder Cup 2010.

After the Olympics and the football World Cup, it's the third biggest event in the sporting calendar.

In 2010 it will be played at the Celtic Manor, in Newport, but it's expected to plough tens of millions of pounds into the whole of the Welsh economy.

Tourism Partnership has developed a new website with online booking facilities and published a new brochure to ride the Ryder Cup wave.

As a result, they're hoping to generate more than £150,000 in extra tourism revenue in the next year alone.

There is already evidence that golf clubs are enjoying big increases in the income they get from green fees.

Roger Lewis, Tourism Partnership Golf Coordinator for North Wales, said:

"Golf in North Wales is more popular and more requested than it is in South Wales apart from the Celtic Manor, in Newport, which is the venue for the Ryder Cup.

"The price of courses throughout North Wales is very attractive to people and our excellent transport links mean we are easy to reach.

"Golfers are coming here from across Northern Europe, particularly Sweden because their golf courses are closed for the winter from now until next March.

"Our courses are proving to be a magnet



*Carole Startin with Roger Lewis*



for Swedish groups of golfers not to mention Finnish and German golfers.

“The good thing is that we’re getting really positive feedback from them – they’ve been delighted with the standard of the courses.

“They love the links golf which doesn’t exist in many other areas of the world – and the hospitality of the Welsh clubs.

“We have three courses that are as good as anything in Britain – Harlech, Aberdovey and Conwy are in the top 10 in the UK.

“Conwy is the only Welsh course to be used for a qualifying tournament for the British Open and it was used again this year for the Ryder Cup Seniors.

“There are other great courses right across North Wales which all have their own charm.

“You tend to find that people want to play one iconic course and then they’ll go and play the lesser known courses.

“Often, they’re finding the hidden gems to be more quirky and more enjoyable than the better known courses.

“It’s quite a novelty for those courses to have an international visitor. It’s really going well.

“Our core business is obviously attracting people from across the border in England.

“Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham are so close and 90 per cent of business comes from there.

“We are also trying to crack the Irish market. Irish golf has gone up so much in price and the ferry service makes us extremely accessible.

“The golf here is as good as most of the Irish courses so we believe there is potential to develop this market.

Tourism Partnership Marketing and Events Executive Carole Startin said: “Golf is extremely important to us and it is one of the key products that we are promoting.

“The Ryder Cup has put us on the global map after it was announced that we were lucky enough to attract the 2010 event.

“North Wales is also riding the Ryder Cup wave and there is more finance available for clubs to improve what they have to offer.

“For the first time ever, we have online tee times with the facility to book several clubs in one go together with accommodation via one website, [www.golf-northwales.co.uk](http://www.golf-northwales.co.uk).

“We’ve had a website for two or three

*Carole Startin with, from left, Aled Jones, Roger Lewis and Peter Lees.*



years but the new one has an online booking mechanism which is important because increasingly people want to do both their research and book online 24/7.

“We’re hoping that the Golf North Wales campaign will generate £150,000 through the conventional booking line and we’re hoping for 100,000 unique visitors to the website.”

Aled Jones, Secretary/Manager of Conwy Golf Club, added: “The focus of the golfing world switched to Wales as soon as the last match of the Ryder Cup was played in Kentucky.

“It’s a great opportunity for us to show the rest of the world what we’ve got in North Wales and make the most of the Ryder Cup. It’s an opportunity we’ll grasp with both hands.

According to Tourism Partnership’s Regional Strategy Director Dewi Davies, the Ryder Cup benefits were already starting to flow.

He said: “We have a great variety of courses, including links courses which are

always popular, and we are developing special golfing break packages across North Wales.

“Through the Events Commission, we have accessed a lot of European funding towards the Ryder Cup’s seniors and juniors events which have been at Harlech, Conwy and Bull Bay on Anglesey.

“The investment that those courses have had to make has enabled them to step up to a higher league.

“As a result, we are already getting more and more business to our top courses in North Wales.

“Income from green fees is in a number of cases going up by six figure sums.”

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